

THE NAOMI ONE ACID ATTACK TRIAL VERDICT by Alexander Baron

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London acid attacker Mary Konye. (Metropolitan Police)

If you are not familiar with this story, it was reported by the BBC in February last year. The before and after photographs of the victim are truly shocking. Later that month it was reported that a man and a woman had been arrested. This afternoon at Snaresbrook Crown Court, Mary Konye, who is aged just 21, has been convicted of that attack. This trial has been lengthy, and for the victim will have been a harrowing and painful experience, especially in view of the allegations made against her. Mary Konye had been a friend of Naomi Oni, and had continued to pose as one after the attack. The motive appears to have been as trivial as one could imagine. In April 2011, the two young women fell out, and Miss Oni is said to have called her an “ugly monster”. The two had grown up together, and this sort of banter or insult happens on a daily basis between friends, workmates, siblings and spouses. With or without apology, it is forgotten the next day, but on this occasion for some indefinable reason it wasn’t, rather it festered, and led to this dreadful act.



One of the photographs of Naomi Oni released by the Metropolitan Police Press Bureau shows the horrific damage inflicted on her face by the sulphuric acid that was thrown on her by Mary Konye.

Konye plotted her revenge methodically, and to disguise herself, purchased clothing that would disguise her as an Orthodox Moslem woman, something that in itself could have had serious consequences for other people if the acid attack had been misinterpreted. It has of course had life-changing effects on Naomi; during one TV interview she broke down and was comforted by Phillip Schofield.

Mary Konye's defence was seemingly bizarre; she claimed Miss Oni had poured the acid on herself, but admitted being part of a (non-existent) conspiracy which was intended to bring her fame and fortune.

Those who are familiar with the Sharmeka Moffitt case and other "hate crime" hoaxes might be tempted to believe that, but there was really too much evidence against Konye, including from Kamilah Andrews, to whom she made incriminating remarks about acid.

Konye's Counsel, Sally O'Neill QC, had the unpleasant task of putting these allegations to Miss Oni, who dismissed them, as did the jury.

After the trial, the man who led the investigation, Detective Chief Inspector Dave Whellams, said the attack had required a great deal of planning; he added that Naomi Oni is a very brave woman, as indeed she is.

Mary Konye will appear in court again on March 7, when she can expect a sentence that runs well into double figures.

[The above article was first published January 23, 2014. Mary Konye was given a mere 12 year sentence. Her victim is serving a life sentence.]